

but we are by far much more organized and ready to prevent these sort of actions.

*The President.* Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

## United States-Israel Joint Statement *April 30, 1996*

President Clinton and Prime Minister Peres have concluded two days of intensive discussions on a broad range of issues relating to the U.S.-Israeli relationship. Those discussions reflect the deep, long-standing and unique bonds of friendship which have characterized the U.S.-Israeli relationship and the legacy of shared values, common interests, and mutual respect for democracy that have made this close and special relationship endure.

The President and Prime Minister reviewed the extent of the U.S.-Israeli relationship in all its dimensions. They agreed that this cooperation in security, economic, and diplomatic areas is grounded in institutions that are functioning extremely effectively to the benefit of both countries. At the same time, they agreed that, in view of continuing threats to regional peace and stability, and in particular the dangers posed by proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and advanced military technologies, U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation will grow in importance.

To this end, the President and the Prime Minister agreed that a steering committee headed by the U.S. Secretary of State and the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs would be established to explore means of enhancing and, where appropriate, formalizing, that cooperation. Two working groups will report to the steering committee. The first, dealing with security and defense matters, will consider all options including the possibility of more formal security accords, for how best to meet common threats in the years to come. It will also identify ways to maximize the effectiveness of U.S. aid to Israel. The second will deal with other policy matters relating to U.S.-Israeli strategic cooperation.

The two leaders affirmed that the strategic partnership between the two countries will continue to be based on two key principles: first, the United States unshakable commitment to Israel's security and its determination to minimize the risks and costs Israel confronts as it

pursues peace; and second, the U.S.-Israeli mutual commitment to a comprehensive peace and their determination to move toward that goal.

With respect to Israel's security, the President specifically reaffirmed the United States commitment to maintain Israel's qualitative edge and to preserve and to strengthen Israel's capability to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any adversary or likely combination of adversaries.

The President and Prime Minister took great pride in signing the U.S.-Israel Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Accord. This agreement sets out practical measures enabling their two countries to make the best possible use of expertise, resources, and capabilities in the war against terror. A Joint Counter-Terrorism Group has been established to monitor and oversee the implementation of the agreement. Israel and the United States also agreed to seek to coordinate their efforts with the international effort against terror launched at Sharm al-Sheikh on March 13, 1996.

The President and the Prime Minister also took note of the joint statement on theater missile defense cooperation signed by the Prime Minister and Secretary of Defense Perry April 28. The United States and Israel recognize the defense of Israel will be made more effective by undertaking necessary steps to ensure that Israel's theater missile defenses are supported by related United States capabilities. The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the positive results to date of the ongoing bilateral dialogue on issues relating to the transfer of equipment and technology to third countries.

With respect to their determination to achieve a comprehensive peace, the two leaders agreed on the importance of implementation of agreements reached and the need to expand the orbit of Arab-Israeli peacemaking with a view toward achieving normal, peaceful relations between Israel and all its Arab neighbors. They welcomed the decision by the Palestinian National Council

to cancel all the provisions of the Palestinian National Covenant which deny Israel's right to exist or are otherwise inconsistent with the September 1993 exchange of letters between Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat. This action is an important demonstration by the Palestinians of their commitment to honor the terms of the 1993 Oslo Accords.

The President and Prime Minister also expressed satisfaction with the improved understanding reached last week on Southern Lebanon as a result of Secretary of State Christopher's negotiating efforts and after discussions

with the governments of Israel and Lebanon and in consultation with Syria. They noted the importance of prompt activation of the monitoring committee and consultative group established by the understanding.

Finally, the President and the Prime Minister agreed on the need to end the Arab boycott and to eliminate discrimination against Israel in all international organizations, including the United Nations.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting on Assistance for Cattle Producers and an Exchange With Reporters

*April 30, 1996*

*The President.* Ladies and gentlemen, first let me—I want to thank this bipartisan congressional delegation from cattle-producing States for coming in. Cattle producers, by numbers, represent the largest single segment of America's agricultural economy. Cattle prices are at a 10-year low, and feed prices are at—are or have been recently at an all-time high. And we want to discuss some potential recommendations for action the Secretary of Agriculture might take, using traditional means at his disposal to help to deal with this situation and help these producers through this difficult time.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who requested this meeting and who brought this matter to our attention, and I'm looking forward to the meeting.

*Q.* How much traditional beef are you going to buy, Mr. President?

*The President.* The Secretary of Agriculture will have an announcement later, once we have time to talk through our options here.

*Q.* Can you act quickly?

*Q.* Will you call up the conservation reserve for more grazing nationwide?

*The President.* Well, we will issue an announcement after the meeting; the Secretary of Agriculture will.

Yes, we're going to act quickly. We won't fool around with it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:43 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House, prior to a meeting with congressional leaders. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters

*May 1, 1996*

*The President.* First, let me say I am very pleased to have Chairman Arafat in the Oval Office today. We need to take this opportunity to take stock about where we are with our common efforts in the Middle East. I had a good

visit with Prime Minister Peres yesterday, and I look forward to this one.

I do want to make two specific points before we begin. First of all, I want to applaud the action that Chairman Arafat has taken in keep-